



COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES
Office of the Commissioner

Anthony Conyers, Jr.
COMMISSIONER

November 24, 2008

MEMORANDUM

TO: Members, State Board of Social Services

FROM: Anthony Conyers, Jr., Commissioner

ACTION: Approve Increase Heating Equipment Maximum Benefit Levels in the Crisis Assistance Component of the Energy Assistance Program (EAP)

The Department of Social Services (DSS) requests that the State Board of Social Services approve, for a one year deviation, the benefit maximums for heating equipment provided through the Crisis component of the EAP.

Currently the maximum benefit levels are \$1200 for heating equipment and \$500 for supplemental heating equipment (tanks, tank stands etc). For the last several years, providing services to eligible households within these levels at times has required coordination of additional community resources to secure and provide services. Because the federal funding source for the EAP, the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) block grant, has not increased over the years, the DSS has continued to retain the current maximums, utilizing community resources to supplement the block grant funds when necessary. However, due to a significant increase in this year's LIHEAP funding, the DSS is requesting approval to increase heating equipment maximum benefit levels.

For FFY 2009, Virginia will receive \$127.6 million in block grant and contingency funds, compared to \$38 million in block grant funds received last year. With this substantial increase, sufficient funding is available to increase the maximum benefit levels for heating equipment. Since it is unknown and unlikely that LIHEAP will be appropriated at this level next year, the DSS requests this increase be approved for the current program year only.

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DSS proposes the following increases:

- Heating Equipment Purchase from \$1,200 to \$1,700
- Provision of Supplemental Equipment/Maintenance from \$500 to \$800

Relevant sections and proposed changes to the EAP guidance manual are included on the attached document.

If you have questions concerning this requested action, please contact our Director of Benefit Program, Tom Steinhauser, by telephone at 804.726.73623 or by e-mail at tom.steinhauser@dss.virginia.gov.

attachment

Energy Assistance Program Guidance Manual

Sections relevant to State Board of Social Services approval to increase maximum benefit levels for heating equipment are included below:

Chapter G.7.a.

NOTE: Repair of heating equipment or combination of repair, and trip charge, ~~maintenance or supplemental equipment~~ can not exceed \$500.

Chapter G.7.b.

The maximum authorization for heating equipment replacement is ~~\$1,200~~ \$1,700.

Chapter G.7.c.

The maximum authorization for supplemental heating equipment/maintenance is ~~\$500~~ \$800.

NOTE: Supplemental equipment/maintenance or combination of heating equipment repair, trip charge and supplemental equipment/maintenance can not exceed ~~\$500~~ \$800.